

**Single Family Design Guidelines Update  
Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update**

**Steering Committee**

**Meeting #16 Notes  
December 3, 2004**

**Steering Committee members:** Chair Dianne Channing, Vice Chair Brian Barnwell, Bruce Bartlett, Joe Guzzardi, Bill Mahan, Helene Schneider and Richard Six.

**Staff:** Jaime Limón (Supervising Planner), Heather Baker (Project Planner) and Jason Smart (Intern).

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

**II. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**  
None.

**III. Administrative Items**

**IV. Modification Examples: Issue Paper E Continued Discussion**

Staff presented a list of project addresses for modifications that were appealed to the Planning Commission. Steering Committee discussion and public comment followed. Public comment included:

**Jim Kahan:** Presented Steering Committee with before-and-after photographs of a project that was granted a modification. Modifications are a zoning issue. The intent of all “good” modifications can be achieved using variances instead. There might be fewer modifications if the City increased fees. Design issues are relevant to Planning Commission discussions because they are interrelated with other planning issues.

**Sally Sphar:** Modifications are sometimes appealed regardless of review board support.

Steering Committee discussion included the following comments:

- Modifications should not be approved if feasible, less negatively impactful design alternatives exist.
- Modifications sometimes have a small impact relative to alternative design solutions, which may have negative impacts such as view blockage.
- Increasing Staff discretion regarding projects could reduce the fairness and consistency of Staff actions.

The Steering Committee made the following recommendations:

- The Good Neighbor Policies (GNP) should discourage modifications that block neighbors’ views. This will more strongly encourage view preservation while not codifying it, thus avoiding City intervention in private view disputes.
- Develop ordinance language that allows projects at the modification hearing level to be referred to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), possibly on the consent calendar, if the project is found to be grossly negligent in adhering to the

GNP. This would help to ensure that projects not otherwise subject to ABR review adhere to the GNP.

- Notice projects at the first design review hearing in order to ensure favorable project outcomes for interested parties.

## **V. Intent Language**

The Steering Committee discussed potential Single Family Design Guidelines intent language and made the following comments:

- Intent language should successfully explain to applicants what is highly encouraged or discouraged.
- The intent language should include an introductory paragraph, an infill issues paragraph, and a hillside issues paragraph.
- An additional fourth paragraph of the intent language could borrow from the first paragraph of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes' Single Family Design Guidelines, because it effectively articulates the concept of neighborhood compatibility. However:
  - The language should not refer to economic issues because they are not addressed in the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance.
  - Intent language borrowed from other jurisdictions should be edited by Staff to make it more appropriate to the City of Santa Barbara.
- Terminology should match what has been defined by the Steering Committee.
- "Impact" is a more appropriate word than "cost," which can be associated with money.
- The length of the intent language and labeling of the paragraphs need to be addressed.
- The last paragraph of the existing language should be edited to read: "... provides a framework for process and foundation for evaluation."

## **VI. Good Neighbor Policies: Issue Paper G Continued Discussion**

The Steering Committee continued discussion of the "Issue Paper G: Good Neighbor Policies" Issue Paper and refined previous Meeting #13: 11/5/04 & Meeting #14: 11/12/04 recommendations to the following:

**Recommendation #1:** Routinely provide guidelines as a handout to applicants. Support in order to ensure favorable outcomes among interested parties.

**Recommendation #2:** Allow project actions based on compliance with Good Neighbor Policies Guidelines.

Support for the reason listed in Recommendation #1 above. Support ordinance language clarifying that discretionary board comments and decisions may be based on compliance with the GNP and that public comment on GNP topics is acceptable.

**Recommendation #3:** The Steering Committee review changes to Good Neighbor Policy text and proposed graphic content and provide feedback.

- Edit the last paragraph in the “Landscaping” section of the draft updated Good Neighbor Policies to read:

*When window placement creates direct views between neighbors that need to be shielded, such as when a balcony placement may allow a line of sight into a neighbor’s side or rear yard or if an applicant is not able to stagger windows, a landscape plan to provide additional screening ~~is~~ may be required by the ABR.*

- Only reference the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and Outdoor Lighting Guidelines in the Good Neighbor Policies, do not repeat the guidelines.
- Recommended a separate Lighting Ordinance update to better address residential concerns such as the possible effects of non-residential projects on nearby homes.

**Recommendation #4:** Require completion of a compatibility checklist as part of Design Review project applications, similar to the city of Palo Alto compatibility checklist.

**Consensus:** Oppose because project architects and the ABR already address the items that would be included in a compatibility checklist and architects will not find it useful. However, support giving applicants an informational compatibility checklist that would not need to be included in project applications.

**Recommendation #5:** Implement Minimum Balcony Design Standards.

Implement guidelines rather than standards for items 2 and 3 and narrow scope of item 1, as described below. Also, define balconies and decks separately, as follows:

Deck: A flat open platform, typically with a railing, either attached to a building or free-standing and supported by pillars, posts, or walls.

Balcony: A platform cantilevered from the wall of a building, usually resting on brackets or consoles, and enclosed with a railing.

1. Design Review Required

Tentatively support requiring decks to be reviewed by ABR, but not requiring ABR review of balconies measuring 3’ by 7’ or less, because the space is not useable and has a relatively small visual impact.

2. 15’ Interior Yard Setback

Guidelines should encourage 15’ interior yard setbacks for decks and balconies over 3’ by 7’ in order to maintain neighbors’ privacy.

3. Chimneys < 8’ Tall on Decks

Guidelines should discourage freestanding chimneys because of potential view blockage. Discuss further during Hillside Issues discussion.

Support allowing rear and side yard upper-story decks and balconies in some cases because small balconies or decks are not as usable and have a relatively small visual impacts. Revisit during Hillside Issues discussion.

**Recommendation #6:** Implement placement and screening Option 2: Allow rear and side yard decks and balconies in some cases.

Support for same reasons as Recommendation #5. Tentatively requiring ABR review for balconies larger than 3' by 7', as decided in Recommendation #5 discussion. Oppose landscaping requirements or guidelines as mitigation of deck or balcony privacy/view impacts because landscaping upkeep may not be enforced.

**Recommendation #7:** Require an "Early Neighbor Discussion Pre-Application Step" and provide incentives for an optional "*Extensive* Early Neighbor Discussion Pre-Application Step."

Oppose requiring early neighbor discussion because differences in language, culture, and personality would make it difficult for applicants to discuss projects with neighbors. However, support giving applicants handouts that encourage and clearly state the benefits of early neighbor discussions, because early neighbor discussions can help to ensure favorable project outcomes.

**Recommendation #8:** Continue current Planning Commission story pole practices and consider Staff ability to require story poles for some Design Review projects.

- Support as a visual impact analysis tool; however, create different story pole requirement levels for ABR/HLC review in order to account for differences in project characteristics.
- The ABR would need to conduct site visits to adequately evaluate projects with story poles.
- Detailed standards are needed for story pole requirements so that projects have equally effective story poles. The Steering Committee formed a subcommittee to further discuss story poles. The subcommittee will consist of Dianne Channing, Brian Barnwell, and Richard Six.
- Further discuss as part of Hillside Issues discussion.

**Recommendation #9:** Allow Design Review hearing comment and discussion of private views.

Support ordinance language clarifying that public comment on GNP topics, including view blockage, is allowed in order to ensure favorable project outcomes for interested parties.

## **VII. Noticing Radii Examples: Issue Paper F Continued Discussion**

Staff presentation was followed by Steering Committee discussion and public comment. Public comment included:

**Laura Allbritton:** Favors a 300-ft. noticing radius because it gives more people an opportunity to be heard, which is a crucial part of due process.

**Jim Kahan:** Favors more noticing. The City should not adopt a noticing radius that is smaller than the 300-ft. state standard. Noticing costs are minimal compared to other fees.

Steering Committee comments included:

- If the noticing radius is too large, the ABR and HLC will be overwhelmed with public comment.
- Ideally, tenants rather than just property owners would also be noticed.
- Perhaps applicants should be required to notice residents themselves.

**Vote:** Recommend that the City require noticing within the nearest 100 ft. of a project or to the 20 closest homes, whichever is larger. **5 in Favor, 2 Abstain.**

## **VIII. Review Upcoming Schedule**

## **IX. Adjourn**